

Initial ROPE meeting for Pokegama/Prairie Lakes Forum Group
July 9th, 2002 (10:00-12:00)
Sawmill Inn, Grand Rapids

Facilitator: Jeffrey L. Kleinert

An introduction of Corps of Engineers personnel was presented and a purpose for the ROPE meeting was explained. Assurances of future public meetings apart from the Forum Group meetings was given for individuals who wished to make concerns known without actually volunteering for group activities.

A press release discussing rising water levels was handed out to those present. With the recent heavy rains, an update on current water levels and the Aitkin flood stage was discussed. A short explanation of the economic guide curve and its impacts was described to the attendees.

A flipchart was used to record what interest groups were represented as each audience member introduced themselves. The following is a list of those interested parties not represented at the meeting:

- 1) MN Deer Hunters Assoc.
- 2) Itasca County Sheriff's Dept.
- 3) Deer River Sportsmen's Club
- 4) Blandin Paper Co.
- 5) Ball Club Lake resorts
- 6) Upper Prairie Lakes Assoc. (Lawrence/Crooked Lakes—Walt Peters)
- 7) Itasca Co. SWCD
- 8) Itasca Resort & Tourism Assoc.
- 9) American Bar Assoc. (attorneys)
- 10) Local Realty office
- 11) Pokegama Lake Assoc.

An overview and status report of the ROPE study brought the group up-to-date and explained the scope, budget, schedule, and planning process.

The role of the Lake Forum Group was explained and the handouts were utilized to make clearer what other ROPE groups being formed would be working on. It was stressed that we were looking today for volunteers who could review options and alternatives in an objective and open-minded manner. A volunteer sign-up sheet was passed around that will form the core of the Lake Forum Group for future meetings. These are tentatively planned to start in the fall and members of the committee can participate via the website where meeting notes will be posted. Joe Parkinen of Grand Rapids (and a Pokegama Lake home-owner) volunteered to be the leader of the Pokegama/Prairie Lake Forum Group.

A question and answer session ensued with discussions on FERC licensing of dams and possible adjustments to licenses, future Congressional hearings as a result of the ROPE

findings, Corps flowage easements on lakeshore property, and concerns about the apparent absence of loon chicks on area lakes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. and attendees were allowed to talk with the Corps representatives individually following the meeting.